

**Notice of Intent to Release a Solicitation
For NASA Minority University-SPace Interdisciplinary Network (MU-SPIN)
October 2004**

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) intend to release a Cooperative Agreement Notice (CAN) for MU-SPIN Network Resources and Training Sites (NRTS) in 2004.

The primary goal of MU-SPIN is to increase the contributions to NASA research, education and technology made by minority institutions. In collaboration with NASA's enterprises, centers, scientists and educators, MU-SPIN leverages the Network Resources and Training Sites program to create partnerships with other affiliated research entities for the advancement of minority institution participation in NASA's unique missions. Expected outcomes of the NRTS program include:

- Partnerships and collaborations that contribute substantially to the NASA mission.
- Use NASA's unique mission challenges and outcomes as the basis for obtaining state-of-the-art research and educational excellence resources.
- Move minority institutions increasingly towards gaining support from sources outside the MUREP funding.
- Contribute significantly to the goals of NASA for diversification in NASA's programs.

NASA has communicated to the research community via research roadmaps and strategic plans, ambitious goals for pioneering research and discovery for mid term 2005-2008 and long term 2010 and beyond. The majority of these goals will be achieved via funded Announcements of Opportunity (AO), Research Announcements (NRA) and Cooperative Agreement Notices. These announcements will be targeted at both individual investigators and collaborative teams. All of these announcements will encourage collaboration with minority institutions and small and disadvantaged businesses. However, there are a significant number of minority institutions that lack the relevant skills and partnerships to effectively participate. To address this, MU-SPIN plans to release a new NRTS solicitation that is designed specifically to target the needs of the agency to realize full participation of minority institutions in its unique missions. MU-SPIN plans to fund Institutes for Collaborative Research and Education (ICRE) at NRTS that will focus on building a competitive skill base to compete in collaboration with a highly qualified NASA research, education or technology partner. (See concept on MU-SPIN website via

http://muspin.gsfc.nasa.gov/download/docs/brochure/muspin_brochure.pdf) Expected ICRE award total funding is \$1.3M per year for 5 years. Proposals from individuals and teams will be accepted. Individual investigators with a student research component should envision funding in the \$30-\$100K range. Interdisciplinary research teams with a student research component may compete for funding up to \$200K. MU-SPIN may request budget negotiation of CAN awards to serve as wide an audience as possible. Because the need to expand the base of scientists and educators from the minority

university community is so great, **this announcement does not require any funded NASA research or education experience in the research or education you choose.** However, proposals should clearly indicate competency in the research or education area you would like to compete for. **If qualified NASA partners have not been made available to you, MU-SPIN will assist in providing them.**

This announcement has two targeted training focus areas:

- (1) Training for full participation for NASA opportunities including focus areas such as Life on Earth, Humans In Space or Exploring the Universe.
- (2) Training for full participation for NASA opportunities for flight missions.

Since 1990, MU-SPIN has been working cooperatively to train minority institutions to effectively use information technology and since 1995, MU-SPIN has funded cooperative agreements to leverage information technology and collaborations to move minority institutions closer towards gaining support from sources outside the MUREP funding to sustain the activities and the infrastructure. From the results of the years of lessons learned and funding the NRTS collaborations, MU-SPIN has established the following priority objectives to meet the needs of the two targeted training focus areas:

- Research and education themes and investigations of proposals must be associated with the science and education objectives found in NASA roadmaps and strategic plans. These proposals must identify a targeted NASA research or education objective from these plans or from a funded NASA project/mission partner for the near term (present to 2006), mid term (2006-2010) or long term (2010 and beyond).
- All research-oriented proposals must identify a strategic partnership with an officially awarded NASA team, or an approved collaborator that demonstrates capabilities for competing and sustaining NASA research.
- All education proposals should identify contributions to NASA's portfolio of activities with cultural or geographical content relevant to underrepresented populations.
- All proposals must allocate 20% of funding to undergraduate or graduate student participation. Post Doctorate appointments may be considered where contributions are critical.
- All funded recipients must participate in MU-SPIN coordinated workshops at least once per fall and spring semester.
- All funded participants must join identified research and education societies and submit papers to identified conferences and journals.
- All funded recipients will be required to respond to selected announcements of opportunity within their NASA theme focus area.
- Outreach to at least two predominantly minority attended K-12 schools with appropriate science education and technology to enhance the institutions ability to meet local, state and national standards for science and math.¹

¹ Potential proposers should be aware that the Cooperative Agreement Notice when released could vary from what is projected in this Notice.

Additional characteristics of this intended CAN are expected to be:

- The Principal Investigator (PI) for each proposal must be from an accredited minority institution as recognized by the Department of Education.
- Minority institutions may submit multiple proposals from different PI's.
- PI's currently funded by the University Research Center program are not eligible for funding from this award.
- Proposals submitted in response to this intended CAN will be evaluated by peer reviews principally on the basis of their applied scientific, technical and educational merit of the proposed investigations and sustenance plan. Due to the fact that no NASA funded experience is required for this CAN, high priority will be placed on funding proposals that clearly indicate well thought out roadmaps and past achievements of partners or proposed concepts.
- The Institute for Collaborative Research and Education concept requires a qualified partner as described earlier. Therefore, participants must include signed letters of endorsement and identification of roles from each institution (including partner K-12 schools) and a targeted roadmap for achieving competitiveness or academic accomplishment. Proposals lacking such letters and roadmap, or letters and roadmap judged inadequate by NASA, may be cause for rejection of the proposal without further review.
- MU-SPIN partners or other qualified ICRE partners may endorse multiple proposals that they deem qualified to accomplish their goals and the goals of this CAN.
- Research and Education focus groups will be formed soon after selection. Each PI will be a member of one of these groups. These groups will meet regularly throughout the lifetime of this award and host collaborative workshops during the academic semesters.

Questions or comments about this intention may be addressed in writing or by E-mail to the MU-SPIN Project Manager:

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The MU-SPIN website will be the repository for additional information and responses to all inquiries. Inquiries will be answered by e-mail and also posted weekly at the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) location on the MU-SPIN website <http://muspin.gsfc.nasa.gov>. Anonymity of persons/institutions who submit questions will be preserved.